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A  
*Confession*  
OF THE  
FAITH AND EXPECTATIONS  
of the  
LORD'S NEW CHURCH,  
ASSEMBLING AT THE  
*Jerusalem Chapel, in Birmingham.*

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“ With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness ; and  
with the Mouth CONFESSION is made unto Salvation.”

Rom. x. 10.

“ Whosoever shall CONFESS me before Men, him shall the  
Son of Man also CONFESS before the Angels of God.”

Luke xii. 8.

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A

## CONFESSION, &c.

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WE, the members of the Lord's New Church, assembling in the *Jerusalem Chapel* in *Birmingham*, conceiving ourselves called upon, by the erroneous accounts of us which have been circulated, to make a just and accurate declaration of our faith and expectations, do now, truly, explicitly, and unreservedly, make it in these words following; viz.

### I.

We believe that although there certainly exists, amongst professing christians of all denominations, a holy remnant of truly religious persons who have not bowed the knee to Baal, (*Rom. ii. 4.*) yet that the world, in general, is at present under the unhappy influence of all that *evil* which is predicted to exist in the last and perilous times; (*2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.*) and that, in consequence of such evil, the understandings of men are darkened, insomuch that there is now but little faith in the LORD, little belief in a future state of existence, and little understanding of the holy word of God.

### II. We

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We further believe, that the God whose mercies have always kept pace with the degeneracy of his creatures, hath powerfully interposed, and employed the most effectual means of removing "*the veil that is spread over all nations,*" (*Isaiah, xxv. 7.*) by making choice of a man of more than ordinary piety and intelligence, and ordaining him to the office of his minister, for the purpose of leading the world to the true object of faith, of proving from his own experience the existence of a future world, and of supplying an unerring rule of interpretation for the perfect understanding of the holy and divine oracles.

## III.

Although we are very far from believing that the writings of *Baron Swedenborg* are the word of God, and are equally far from regarding them as the objects of implicit credence and devout adoration, yet we do not hesitate to express a sincere belief in their utility and excellence, as expository and illustrative of the sacred pages; and we are of opinion that when once the intelligent, the pious, and especially the scientific part of the world, can open them without prejudice, and peruse them with candour, they will join us in regarding them as a peculiar blessing from heaven, well calculated, by a rational and judicious use thereof, to afford a defence against the prevalent errors of scepticism, naturalism, fanaticism, and infidelity, and to establish the empire of sound reason and true religion in the breast of every humble reader.



## IV. If



## IV.

If asked on what grounds we receive the testimony of this theologist, we answer on the most reasonable and satisfactory ones that can possibly exist; we receive his testimony because we find, after a fair inquiry and full investigation, that his *doctrines* are in perfect agreement with the teachings of the word of God, being, in fact, derived therefrom; that his *illustrations* are in perfect agreement with the dictates of right reason; and that his *visions* are the relations of one who was possessed of too much sobriety to be himself deceived, and of too much integrity to be able to deceive others\*.

\* **BARON SWEDENBORG**, who was the Son of a celebrated Bishop of West Gothia in Sweden, was born 1689. In the year 1716 his learning, talents and piety, recommended him to the notice of Charles XII. King of Sweden, who appointed him to an office of great public trust and honour. In 1719 he was enobled by the Queen Ulrica Eleonora; from which time he took his seat with the nobles of the equestrian order, in the triennial assembly of the states. About 1729 he was made a member, by invitation, of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, and of the Society of Sciences at Upsal. The Academy of Petersburg sent him a diploma in the year 1734. He died in London, 1772. His writings, both philosophical and theological, were remarkably extensive; not less than Sixty Quarto Volumes of his are preserved in the Royal Academy at Stockholm. **SANDAL**, a member of the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, Superintendent of the Mines, and Knight of the order of the Polar Star, in an Oration delivered before the House of Nobles, says "The **BEST HEART** and the **BEST CHARACTER**, were manifested in him. In him also was to be found a happy assemblage of an excellent memory, a prompt conception, and a most clear judgement. He was always surrounded by men of sense, and much respected by them. There was no craft, or dissimulation to be found in him. **WISDOM, ERU-**

## V.

The doctrines which, through the instrumentality of this enlightened minister, we have derived from the *word of God*, are briefly as follow.

We believe that the holy *word of God* is the only source of spiritual truth, and the only rule of christian practice; and that it is, in all and every part of it, the medium of conveying inexhaustible supplies, not only of spiritual *light* for enlightening the understanding, but also of spiritual *life* for enlivening the heart. (*Psal.* cxix. 93. *John* vi. 63.)

DITION, and VIRTUE procured him the favour and particular kindness of the Kings who reigned during his time\*.

\* He preserved the whole strength of his mind to the last, without experiencing that decay of mental faculties unto which so many are subject after a long pursuit of Science."

The REV. T. HARTLEY, the late Rector of Winwick, in Northamptonshire, who was personally acquainted with him, says, "In him were to be found the SOUND DIVINE, the GOOD MAN, the DEEP PHILOSOPHER, the UNIVERSAL SCHOLAR, and the POLITE GENTLEMAN."

DR. GREGORY, the Author of the Church History, says, "The Practical Morals recommended by BARON SWEDENBORG are of the purest kind, with which, from the best authorities, we have reason to believe HIS LIFE PERFECTLY CORRESPONDED."

Mr. and Mrs. SHEARSMITH, at whose house the Baron lodged at the time of his death; deposed upon oath, before the Lord Mayor of London, that "about a fortnight or three weeks before he died, he received the Sacrament from the hands of a foreign Clergyman, and enjoyed a SOUND MIND, MEMORY, and UNDERSTANDING TO THE LAST HOUR OF HIS LIFE."

## VI. We

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We believe that there is one God, and that there is none other but he. (*Mark* xii. 32. *Deut.* vi. 4.)

## VII.

We believe that in this one God there existeth a divine trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; (*Luke* i. 35. *Matt.* xxviii. 19. *1 John* v. 7.) not consisting, however, of a trinity of *persons*, like *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but a trinity of *principles*, centering in the one divine person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST; (Compare *Matt.* xxviii. 19. with *Acts* ii. 38. viii. 16.) the divine humanity\* of CHRIST being that principle which is called the SON, (*Luke* i. 35.) the divine nature or essence dwelling in the humanity being that principle which is called the FATHER, (*John* x. 30. *John* xiv. 11. *2 Cor.* v. 19.) and the divine virtue or influence, proceeding from the humanity for the sanctification of the faithful, being that principle which is called the HOLY SPIRIT; (*John* xx. 22. *Rom.* viii. 9.) thus, that in the LORD JESUS CHRIST “dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily;” (*Col.* ii. 9.) that he is “the only wise God our saviour,” (*Jude* 25.) “the true God and eternal life,” (*1 John* v. 20) “God over all blessed for ever.” (*Rom.* ix. 5.)

\* By the Humanity of CHRIST we mean his human nature; consisting of the rational mind and body, as distinct from that infinite and eternal Godhead from which it proceeded. (*John* viii. 42. xvii. 8.)

## VIII. We

## VIII.

We believe that there were two saving works which CHRIST performed during his manifestation on earth; viz. 1. The combating and subduing of those spiritual enemies under whose dominion mankind, at that time, particularly were, and thus delivering the world from their captivity. (*John* xii. 31. *Luke* x. 18. *John* xvi. 33. *Isa.* lxiii. 1 to 9. lix. 16. 17. 20. xlv. 5. 10. *Psal.* xlv. 3 to 7.) 2. The glorification of his humanity, or, in other words, the full and perfect union thereof with the infinite and eternal godhead. (*John* x. 30. xiv. 11. v. 26. *Matt.* xxviii. 18. *Col.* ii. 9.) By the former of these works the evil influences of hell were removed, and by the latter, the opposite influences of heaven were brought near by the giving of the holy spirit. (*John* vii. 39.)

## IX.

We believe that there are, generally speaking, two essential means of salvation, viz. a penitent faith\* directed towards God in CHRIST, (*John* iii. 18. 16. vi. 47. xx. 31. vi. 35. viii. 24. 1 *Pet.* i. 8. *Heb.* xii. 25.) and 2. a resigned and submissive obedience to his will, by a renunciation of every intention, purpose and thought which is in opposition thereto. (*Heb.* v. 9. *Luke* xiii. 5. *Luke* vi. 46.) The former of these means leading to the possession of that holy spirit (*Matt.* xxi. 22.) without the aid of which the divine will cannot be obeyed, (*John* xv. 5.) and the latter leading

\* By this penitent faith we would be understood to mean a faith which is the effect of a discovery of hereditary evils, and of "godly sorrow" on their account. (*Mark* i. 15.)



to that *purity of heart* without which we cannot see God. (*Matt. v. 8. Heb. xii. 14.*)

## X.

We believe that good works are not confined to frequenting churches, distributing alms, &c. but that every work (whether of word or action) is a good work which is "wrought in God," and proceedeth from a religious motive: (*Col. iii. 17. 23. 1 Cor. x. 31. xv. 18*) nevertheless that no *merit* is due for any work to *man*, but only to that divine being "*without whom we can do nothing.*" (*John xv. 5.*)

## XI.

We believe that the two sacraments of *Baptism* and the *holy supper* are of divine commandment, and ought to be observed as outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual graces: the former signifying that spiritual baptism whereby an entrance is ministered to the soul into the kingdom of God, and the latter that spiritual repast which is enjoyed by those to whom such entrance is already ministered.

## XII.

We believe that there is a *spiritual* body, as well as a *natural* one; (*1 Cor. xv. 44.*) and that, at the period of death, the latter will return to the dust as it was, and the former will rise to receive its unchangeable judgement of everlasting reward or punishment. (*Luke xvi. 22, 23. xxiii. 43.*)

## XIII.

We believe that there is not only a *personal* advent of CHRIST with the holy angels to sit in judgment on the disembodied spirits of men,  
but

but that there is also a *spiritual* advent of CHRIST, in the power and glory of his holy spirit, to the soul of every faithful person. (*John* xiv. 18. 23. *Rev.* iii. 20.)

## XIV.

We believe that the holy word of GOD, unlike any other book, contains a spiritual sense distinct from the letter; (*Psalms* cxix. 18. *1 Cor.* x. 11. *Heb.* viii. 5. ix. 9. 23. *Col.* ii. 17. *Lu.* xxiv. 45. *Jo.* v. 63.) but that, nevertheless, the *letter* of the word is perfectly true when rightly understood. It is true, as therein expressed, that CHRIST *bare the sins of the world*; for, at a period when the world were, both soul and body, under the evil influences of the *rulers of darknefs and wickednefs*, he, in his own person, sustained the full force of those influences, being *tempted in all points as we are tempted*, in order that he might redeem or deliver mankind therefrom. (See *Matt.* viii. 16. 17.) It is true that CHRIST *suffered* for the salvation of mankind: for his most grievous sufferings were those which he endured in his combats with the rulers of darkness and wickedness; and these painful combats were endured in order that mankind might be delivered from the evil influences of hell, (*John* xii. 31.) and in order that the contrary influences of heaven might be brought near unto them by the glorification of the humanity, and the consequent giving of the holy spirit. (*John* vii. 39. *Luke* xxiv. 26. *Heb.* ii. 10.)

It is true that CHRIST *fulfilled the law for us*, for it was by a fulfillment of the law that the above mentioned works of redemption were effected. (*Matt.* iv. 4. 6. 10.)

It is true that CHRIST made an *atonement* for mankind; for the word *atonement* is derived from the old english expression, to set *at one*; (*Acts* vii. 26.) and the works which CHRIST performed led to the giving of that holy spirit whereby those who are by nature at enmity with God are set at one with him, and are in a state of reconciliation.

It is true that CHRIST is the *mediator of the new covenant*; for the humanity of CHRIST *mediates* between us and the indwelling Father. (*John* i. 18. *Matt.* xi. 27.)

Lastly, It is true that we are saved by the *blood of CHRIST*; for the *natural* blood of CHRIST, which was shed upon Calvary, was productive of saving effects (compare *Luke* xxiv. 26. and *John* vii. 39.); and the *spiritual* blood of CHRIST, or, in other words, his *holy spirit*, is the means whereby alone we are reconciled to God, and the soul is cleansed from its spiritual defilements. (*1 Cor.* vi. 11.)

## XV.

We believe that the Creed which is called the *Apostles* Creed is, when properly understood, in perfect agreement with the word of God. We also believe that the Creed which is called the *Athanasian* Creed, is perfectly true, if for a trinity of *persons* be substituted a trinity of *principles* in the one divine person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

## XVI.

With regard to our *political* sentiments, we are friends to social order and good government. We condemn that violent spirit which would passionately destroy all distinctions of rank; and we think that the government of this country,

as established at the period of the revolution, consisting of an equal balance of power in the King, Lords, and Commons, is admirably calculated to preserve the liberties, and promote the happiness, of society.

## XVII.

We believe, that "*the time is come, even the set time, for the LORD to have mercy upon Zion.*" That he is now blessing the world in a peculiar manner with an out-pouring of his spirit of light and life through the medium of his holy word; and although the number of those who have embraced the sovereign Truth or received the supreme good, is at present comparatively small, yet we look forward with confidence to a period when, in consequence of "*the LORD's judgements which are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall have learned righteousness,*" and when "*they who are ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, shall come and worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.*" (Isa. xxvii. 13.)

It is our intention to co-operate zealously yet temperately with the divine providence in the production of these happy and desirable effects; by an undaunted, yet charitable, declaration of the truth, and by a peaceable and orderly conduct, to the utmost of our ability promoting the designs of the LORD, expediting the fulfilment of divine prediction, and hastening the approach of those blessed times, when "*the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.*" (Rev. xxi. 3.)

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